

HAVING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE



STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Students will discuss ways to maintain a growth mindset.
- Students will articulate feelings of competence as learners.
- Students will identify positive attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning.
- Students will participate in discussions as well as ask and respond to questions to acquire information concerning a topic, text, or issue.
- Students will create presentations using collages to support communication and clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

Objectives

Students will be able to give positive statements about themselves and others.

Students will be able to explain how a positive attitude changes how we feel/act.

Students will turn a negative thought or experience into a positive thought.

Students will understand the importance of a growth mindset through positive self-talk.

Students will develop strategies to help them overcome challenges and mistakes.

Materials Needed

- “Positive Thoughts” and “Negative Thoughts” activity sheets for each student (“Starter”)
- Blank paper and coloring supplies for each student (“You Do”)

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Starter (10 minutes)

Show a list of words to students either on a SMART Board or on a handout. (*You can opt to use the “Positive Thoughts” and “Negative Thoughts” activity sheets, or come up with sayings you have heard students say.*) The first list of words will be positive sayings. After giving the students a few minutes to read the words, ask the class how those words made them feel. Then, give the students a list of negative sayings and a few minutes to read these words. Ask the class how these words made them feel. Ask the class what the difference was between the two sets of words that they just read and how the two different lists of words made them feel.

Teacher Presented Knowledge/I Do (10 minutes)

Say to students, “Having a positive attitude is an important character trait to have. Thinking positively can be hard to do sometimes, but when we think positively, we feel better about ourselves. Often, people who think positively are able to experience more success in life than those who are always negative.” Then, ask students to explain why they feel people who think positively are often more successful. Lead students to understand that positive people are often happier than those people who think negative thoughts more frequently.

Guided Student Practice/We Do (20 minutes)

Pose the following question to students: “How can the brain grow?” Give students a few minutes to respond, then say, “We’re going to learn to make our brains grow through positive self-talk!”

Share the following two definitions with the class:

Fixed mindset—the belief that one has traits and talents that are fixed and cannot be changed, and that success is created through talent alone.

Growth mindset—the belief that one can become smarter and improve through hard work; can learn, change, and develop new skills; and can be better equipped to handle setbacks.

After sharing the definitions, stress that one way to have a “growth” mindset is to develop *positive self-talk*. Then, create a T-chart with “Fixed Mindset” at the top of the left column and “Growth Mindset” at the top of the right column. Together with the class, list common fixed mindset comments that the students say to themselves when faced with a challenge. (*An example might be “I stink at math” or “I can’t do this.”*) Then, brainstorm positive self-talk for each fixed mindset comment and list it in the growth mindset column on the chart. (*An example might be “I can work to improve my math skills” or “I will try.”*)

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Student Independent Practice/You Do (20 minutes)

Hand out blank pieces of paper to each student and coloring supplies. Instruct students to draw pictures of themselves and to write down one positive thing about themselves on their paper. Once everyone has finished, tell students that they are going to walk around the class and write one positive thing on each of their classmates' papers. You can write a positive comment on each student's paper as well. Once everyone has had a chance to write something positive on one another's papers, instruct the students to go back to their desks and read the positive comments that were left by their classmates.

Closure (5 minutes)

Ask the students how reading all of these positive comments made them feel. Say, "Are there some positive thoughts that you have never had about yourself before? Do you think these comments will help you think more positively about yourself in the future?" Then, remind students, "Thinking positively about ourselves is something that is very important. When we think positively, it makes us feel better about ourselves. When people say positive things about us, it makes us feel good. My challenge for you tonight is to go home and to say one positive thing to each member of your family and see how they react."

Student Assessment

1. Do you have more negative thoughts or positive thoughts? After today, do you think you can change these negative thoughts into positive ones?
2. Have you ever been around someone who is always negative? How did it make you feel?
3. What can you do in the future to help make your brain stronger and smarter?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Art Extension

Have students depict people, places, and things that give them positive feelings.

Drama Extension

Have students perform short role-plays that demonstrate the power of positive self-talk.

ELA Extension

Have students write letters about challenges in their current grade and how having a growth mindset helped them to overcome the challenges.

ELA Extension

Have students analyze quotes about having a growth mindset. (*For example, "It's not that I'm so smart; I just stay with problems longer."*)

Music Extension

Have students create a "Positive Songs Playlist." The playlist will consist of all the songs they listen to when they are feeling down and need a boost of positivity. Allow students time to share their playlists with the class and to explain why each song boosts their positivity.

Technology Extension

Have students use the internet to research famous people who have experienced failure (e.g., Oprah Winfrey, Steve Jobs, Michael Jordan, Albert Einstein). Then, have students choose one "famous failure" and create a slideshow presentation to show how positive thinking influenced the chosen person's success.

POSITIVE THOUGHTS

I am smart.

I am a hard worker.

I am a good friend.

I am responsible.

I am dependable.

I am funny.

I am brave.

I am good at sports.

I am a great reader.

I am helpful.

I am great at math.

I am respectful.

I am liked.

I am kind.

I am artistic.

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

I am stupid.

I never do anything right.

I am terrible at sports.

No one wants to be my friend.

Everything is hard.

I can't draw.

Everyone is mean.

My teacher always yells at me.

I hate math.

My big brother never wants to play with me.

Recess is boring.

I am the worst reader.

I am going to fail school.

I always get yelled at to do my chores at home.

I never do anything fun.